

## **Chapter XV**

### **A Miraculous Chain of Events**

July 25, 1926 – December 31, 1926

Sheffield noticed that the clouds had dissipated and the sky was clear. Below he could see the Rocky Mountains of Colorado stretching as far as he could see into the distance. That told him that he was a third of the way across the county.

The trip down memory lane had been medicine for his soul. Those were good years, gone forever with the winds of time. Blown away by the winds of war. It had been five months since he last saw Geannie and the kids and he had missed them dreadfully. Oh the vision of loveliness she was when they last said goodbye. Oh how he loved her.

The war had taken its toll on Sheffield. The emotional scars were much deeper than any physical harm the enemy had inflicted on him. As much as he had trained and prepared for it during those years of peace, he wasn't prepared to see anyone die. The only thing that was keeping him sane and his emotions in check was Geannie and the example she had been. She was the real strength of his life. He realized that he couldn't let the war become personal. He was a professional, now of advanced rank, and he realized that was how he needed to conduct the business of war. Perhaps his new assignment would give him a fresh start to do just that. But first, he hoped for just one day to go home.

Captain Brason closed his eyes to try to get some rest on the remainder of the flight. But his mind wouldn't stop. He picked up where he had left off. There were many more good years to remember prior to that horrible day of infamy. Remembering Geannie and thinking of her was far better than what little sleep he might have gotten.

Gennie had just put Sandy down for her nap. As she returned to the front room, she found herself standing face to face with her worst nightmare. "You're supposed to be in prison! What do you want with me?" she screamed.

"I came to finish what I started, cookie. I can't let you prove that you're such a goody goody." Will Chaney sneered.

Geannie froze where she was standing, unable to move. Her legs were like lead weights and wouldn't move. He moved closer. She tried to fight, but her arms just hung limp at her side. Standing only inches away, his stench was overpowering. With one swift swipe of his hands, he had literally ripped her clothes from her quivering body.

With the back of his hand, he hit her along the side of her face, sending her sprawling to the floor. Unable to struggle, the monster leaped on top of her. Terror gripped her heart as he forced himself on her. Once he had his way with her and had taken what she did not give, he sat poised over her ravaged body

with the knife in both hands, ready to plunge it into her heart. Mustering all the strength she had, she was finally able to scream.

“Geannie, Geannie, what's the matter?” Curly asked as he shook her awake.

Geannie sat up with a start, sweat pouring from her forehead. “Oh, Sheffield! I just had the worst nightmare.”

“There, there, sweetheart. You're safe. I have you.” Curly said as he held her tightly in his arms.

“I reckoned that I about had that whole Chaney thing behind me. I dreamed that he had come back for me. It was so real, I thought for sure I was goin to die.”

“Chaney is facing a twenty year prison sentence. He can't hurt you.”

“I know. But, it was so real. I reckon its still goin to take a bit more time.”

“That was a traumatic experience, I'm sure its something that is going to take a while. Are you okay now? Go back to sleep and and you'll see, tomorrow will be swell day.”

“Just hold me, Flyboy.” Geannie nestled up next to him and lay in his strong arms. Knowing she was safe, she drifted back to sleep. She never again had another nightmare about it.

Geannie was determined to get on with plan to have another baby. It had been six months and she still wasn't pregnant. Except for that week in San Francisco, they had to put their efforts on hold while Curly was gone and during the whole attack incident. According to her calender, the next best chance was the first week in August; just enough time to do some conniving. She had hoped to kidnap Curly and get away for a couple of days but that didn't work out. The next best thing was to plan a special evening out: dinner and a movie, followed by the serious business at hand.

On the appointed Friday, Curly came home to find found Geannie all “dolloed up” as he put it, for an evening out. She looked ravishing, which is the effect that she was hoping for. He freshened up while Geannie went to pick up the babysitter.

Together, they set off across the bay to San Diego to have dinner at a fine restaurant. The Naval officer and the elegant lady turned more than a few heads as the matradee lead them through the crowded restaurant to their table.

After dinner, Geannie had Curly take her to the opening of the most anticipated romantic motion picture of 1926, Don Juan, starring John Barrymore, at the luxurious sixteen hundred seat Balboa Theater. Not only was it the most anticipated picture, but it was the first feature-length film with synchronized Vitaphone sound effects and musical soundtrack, though it had no spoken dialogue. The soundtrack was not part of the actual film, but was issued separately on phonograph records that were played while the film was being projected.

Although the picture wasn't Curly's cup of tea, Geannie loved it. The womanizing Don Juan practically seduced her as she sat in the audience. Curly however was smart enough to come away from it with the idea that Geannie was hoping he would get.

It was around ten thirty when they returned home. The babysitter had put Sandy to bed earlier in the evening. She paid the young girl for her evening and had Curly take her home. When he got back, Geannie was waiting with one last element of her romantic evening that involved an unusual game of chess that involved losing more than the major game pieces. She got the idea from Susan who had told her about playing strip poker. Geannie didn't have to let him win because he was better at chess than she was.

Laying in each others arms in the afterglow of the marital embrace, Geannie was the first to break the silence as she ran her fingers through the thick curly hair on his chest. "Do you reckon it worked this time? After all, we have only been trying for several months now."

"I suppose time will tell." Curly assured her as he twisted her cross necklace between his thumb and forefinger.

"I don't understand why it takes me so long. Mother says that all Daddy had to do was to look at her and she got pregnant."

"Thats more than I needed to know."

"Well, look how long it took with Sandy. Now its taking a long time again. I just want to have another baby."

Curly didn't say anything, but listened to Geannie pour out her feelings.

"I get frustrated sometimes because of it. It makes me wonder if there is something wrong with me."

"Maybe you're trying too hard." Curly suggested.

Geannie paused for a moment before continuing. "On the bright side, trying is sure a lot of fun. Do you recollect our first time?"

"I'll never forget it!" Curly remembered.

"Me neither. I wasn't sure just what to expect. Mother told me that it would be worth waiting for. She was sure right. I'm glad that God, in his wisdom, came up with this as the way to bring children into the world. I can't think of any other way a husband and wife can get any closer, physically and emotionally. I mean, it is totally giving of ourselves to each other, don't you think?"

"My aren't you waxing philosophical. If that time didn't work, maybe this one will."

The next morning, Geannie added more hearts to the calendar. Two for that night and one more for the next morning and yet another for later that afternoon. Maybe it worked and maybe it didn't. They were determined to keep trying until it did. Even though it seemed to take longer than they had hoped, they

found that the effort had brought them closer together a husband and wife and their love grew deeper.

During the late summer, Curly's squadron transitioned from their obsolete Vought VE-7s to brand new Curtiss F6C-3 Hawks, a navalized version of the Army's P-1. The F6C-3 was strengthened for carrier borne operations and fitted with an arrester hook and were a big improvement over the VE-7s. With their four hundred thirty five horsepower engine, they could fly higher, faster, and farther. To Curly's delight they were armed with two fixed forward-firing thirty caliber Browning machine guns mounted in the forward fuselage, instead of just one.



For the rest of the summer and into the fall, the squadron trained with their new aircraft. The only time they went to sea was for carrier qualifications aboard Langley. On those occasions, they flew out to the ship in the morning and returned to North Island late in the afternoon.

Lieutenant Commander Frank "Honus" Wagner relived Commander Eliison as the commanding officer of Fighting Two. Commander Wagner had demonstrated the concept of dive-bombing earlier in the year and was now training his squadron to master the technique. By the beginning of fall, the squadron demonstrated their accuracy with dive-bombing by scoring nineteen hits out of forty-five bombs dropped onto a one hundred by forty five foot target. Curly, with his arebotic skills, proved to be a natural at dive bombing.

Curly took advantage of the time he had with Geannie and Sandy and made the most of every day. Geannie was particularly glad to have him home. All during that time, countless hearts were added to the calendar, to no avail. During the summer and fall, they were able to go out on several excursions as a family since his duty kept him close to home. Geannie continued to teach piano lessons but cut back on her volunteer work, in order to be available to spend time with Curly. Their social calendar included getting together with Freddy and Susan and Tom and Ramona, and not so frequently with Shorty and Wilma.

It wasn't until the third week in October that Curly and Fighting Two went to sea for a week aboard the Langley. On the twenty second, Fighting Two made a mock attack on the Battle Fleet at San Pedro. Informed of the pending exercise the fleet got under way. The commander of the Battle Fleet expected a standard low-altitude level bombing attack which would have been detected in time for an effective response. Instead, the F6C-3 Hawks came in high and unseen. They nosed over at twelve thousand feet into near vertical dives and screamed down upon their unwary targets and made their simulated drops before the ships' anti-aircraft guns could be manned. Curly's drop would have scored a direct hit right between the stacks of a Colorado class battleship.

Soon after Curly returned from the exercises, it was time for his annual thirty day leave. True to his promise, they were going home. It was just what Geannie needed. On Sandy's second birthday they boarded an eastbound train for the four day trip to Roanoke.

It was unusually warm for November when they got off the train in Roanoke. Both families were gathered at the depot to greet them that Thursday afternoon. It was joyous reunion indeed. The center of attention was Sandy, of course. She was absolutely adorable and loved all of the attention. She was as smart as a whip too and could talk up a blue streak.

After a warm round of greetings, their luggage was loaded into the Senator's car which led a procession of family members back to the Austin Mansion.

It was dinner time and the weary travelers sat down to a luscious feast prepared by the women of both the Austin and Brason families. The evening was spent visiting and getting reacquainted with those who were able to come. There was even a belated birthday party for Sandy in which she was lavished with gifts. She didn't quite know what to do with them, but she loved the attention. For Sandy, there were so many new loved ones to meet. The festivities came to a rather early end as the little family retired for the night.

The next morning Curly and Geannie discussed what they were going to do with their time as they got ready for the day.

"So what do you want to do today, Geannie?" Curly asked.

"I'd like to just stay close to home for a few days," Geannie replied. "I just want to relax and not have to worry about much of anything. Besides it will let Sandy bond with her grandparents, aunts and uncles, and her cousins. That's the hard thing about living clear across the country." Geannie lamented

"Then what?" Curly wanted to know.

"Well, since you asked," Geannie began. "Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next week we are going to the cabin. Just the two of us."

"Why then?" Curly asked.

"Because my little calendar says so." Geannie answered bluntly.

"Boy, am I in trouble!" Curly laughed.

"Yes you are, Flyboy. Do I ever have plans for you!" She continued, "I have it all worked out with Mother. She is going to watch Sandy for us."

"Does she know what you're up to?" asked Curly.

"Uh huh. She's the one that suggested that we go to the cabin." Geannie answered.

"Oh boy," Curly muttered. "I'm not going to be able to look her in the eye now. Does any one else

know?"

"Nope. Just Mother."

Changing the subject Curly asked. "Is there anything else you want to do?"

"Actually," Geannie confided. "I'd like to spend a day and revisit Hollins. Maybe look up some of my instructors." Then she continued, "I'd like to go and visit our brothers and their families in their homes, one on one. Sometimes it's hard to really connect when we're in a big crowd like last night. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yeah, I do. We really didn't get a chance to talk to Walt and Sarah much at all last night." Curly added. "I'm sure our folks have things in mind for us to do as well."

Their conversation was interrupted by a call to breakfast. Marie's and Curly's eyes met briefly as she handed him the platter of bacon. Curly quickly looked away.

Later in the morning Curly went next door to visit with his father. Geannie spent the morning with her mother. Marie asked her how she was doing after the attack. Geannie had told her a little about it in a letter but hadn't gone into much detail. Geannie was surprised that she was able to talk about it in depth without any of the feelings of anger and guilt that had once held her captive.

During the afternoon Geannie and Curly sat on the porch swing looking out over the half covered oak trees while Sandy played in the other half of the leaves that had been raked into piles.

And so went the next few days. On Sunday they attended services at the Greene Memorial United Methodist Church. Since they had last been there, Walt had taken over the pastoral responsibilities from his father. He had been the assistant pastor ever since he graduated from seminary. Now the roles were reversed; Emmett was assisting Walt.

On Wednesday morning, they said goodbye to Sandy who was more than happy to stay with Grandma. Curly placed their luggage and a couple bags of provisions in the trunk of Senator Austin's spare car and they drove up to the cabin. It was about mid morning when they pulled up in front of the cabin.

Curly helped Geannie out of the car and grabbed their suitcases. With both of his hands full, Geannie took him by the arm and walked up to the front door with him. He set the luggage down and unlocked the door and swung it wide open.

Curly reached for the suitcases when Geannie demanded, "Carry me in, Lieutenant!" Curly slid the suitcases through the door. He swooped Geannie up into his arms, one under her knees and the other around her shoulders. With her arms around his neck, he carried her through the door. Once inside, he swung the door shut with his elbow.

Before setting her down, he looked deep into her emerald green eyes. He saw a very familiar look,

one that he had seen before and he knew what it meant. It was a look of longing, passion, and desire. Not only for him, but for what only he could give her. He knew that he was in for a workout.

He set her on her feet and foolishly asked, "What do you want to do first.?"

"Funny you should ask." she said.

After coming for air after the long passionate kiss she had just planted on him, Curly pushed her away and said, "Oh no you don't. You're not getting me that easy. You're going to have to work for it."

"What would you like me to do?" she asked trying to act shy.

"Uhhh," Curly paused for moment. Then he blurted out, "Dance for me!"

"You asked, for it." Geannie answered as she strode over to the cabinet that housed the old Victrola. "You got it!" Geannie mumbled the titles of the records as she rifled through them. "Ah, here's one," she said as he put it on the turntable and wound up the crank. As the music blared from the horn she began her dance of seduction.

Curly was mesmerized by her flowing motions as she unraveled before him as if a butterfly shedding its cocoon. When the music stopped, she stood before him in all of her glory. "How was that, Lieutenant?" she asked all out of breath.

"That was very naughty." He answered.

"Naughty?" Geannie asked.

"I mean, very nice! Very, very nice." Curly corrected himself as Geannie slowly swayed toward him.

Later they put things back together and tidied up. Geannie went into the kitchen to see what was in the pantry, while Curly brought the supplies in from the car. They fixed lunch together and ate it out on the porch.

The warm spell extend into that week as well. It was even unusually warm in the mountains. They sat out on the porch long into the afternoon just talking. The oak and ash trees had all lost their leaves. The Douglas fir provided the only green to the scenery. They sat in silence for a long while, holding hands just soaking it all in. All of a sudden there was a rustling in the underbrush. Both Geannie and Curly turned their eyes to the sound. In a moment a whitetail deer emerged. A moment later four more does followed. The lovers sat motionless, undetected by their forest visitors. The deer grazed on the dry grass that surrounded the cabin. Eventually they disappeared back into the brush.

Curly was first to break the silence. He expressed to Geannie what had been on his mind during the long silence. "You don't know how much I appreciate you for following me clear across the country so I can pursue my dream of flying. I know its not easy for you sometimes, but your right there supporting me. It means so much to me that you and Sandy are there with me. You don't know how much it means to me

that you are always there waiting for me when I return from exercises. It isn't easy for me to be away either, you know."

Geannie didn't respond, she just listened to what he was saying. After a moment of silence, he continued. "I sure admire you for your strength and courage. I rely on it a lot you know. You're the pillar that holds me up. I don't know what I would do without you. I thought I had lost you before I ever had you during the influenza outbreak.

"You amaze me at how you have learned to juggle all of the things that you're involved with. I'm glad that you finally figured out when to say no. You sure brighten up my life. I love your girlish squeal and giggle. I'm amazed at how much more I love you now. I never would have thought I could love you more than when we were first married. I have always loved you. I always will."

As he went on and on, Geannie soaked in every word, sitting there with her long legs across his lap. Finally she interrupted, "Shut up and kiss me already." as she threw her arms around his neck. For the next several minutes they were engaged in some very serious smooching. This time it was Curly who took the initiative and led Geannie back into the cabin. She was more than willing to follow him.

As the evening began to settle, Curly built a campfire in the fire pit while Geannie put together the fixings for a wiener roast. Curly cut a couple of willows from the creek down below the cabin and whittled them to a sharp point. By the time they were finished with their hot-dogs and s'mores it was getting dark. Curly stoked up the fire so that it burned bright, high and hot. The evening chill settled quickly once the sun went down. Geannie went inside and brought back a blanket.

Snuggled together next to the fire, the stars began to shine in the moonless night sky. Curly began pointing out various stars and constellations as they appeared. The first to appear had been Venus and Saturn. Geannie taught Curly a fifth grade level science lesson about the Solar System. Curly explained to Geannie how he had learned to navigate by the position of the stars. As it got darker the entire sky was a canopy of stars, presided over by the brilliant strip of the Milky Way that arched through the heavens.

As the fire died down, it was time to go in and get ready for bed. As they undressed, Curly went looking for his pajamas. "I can't find my pajamas." he stated. "Didn't you bring them?"

"Nope," she replied as she slipped into bed, holding the covers open for Curly to join her. "We're not going to need them. Besides I reckon we can keep each other warm."

The next morning Curly was up early. He got dressed and went outside to chop some firewood. The sound of the ax splitting the logs woke Geannie. She got up and wandered into the front room and stood in the big picture window watching him. He looked like a lumberjack in his flannel shirt. The stubble on his unshaved face added to the effect. He looked so rugged and dashing. He hadn't seen her watching him,



until she knocked on the window and beckoned him in. Without hesitation, he buried the ax head in the chopping block and went in. With her index finger she motioned for him to follow him into her lair.

No trip to the cabin would be complete without going to the lake. Later in the morning Geannie packed a picnic and they hiked back to the lake. Curly spread out the blanket and Geannie set out the fixings. Content after having had something to eat they laid back on the blanket for nap and fell asleep in each others arms.

After a while they woke up as the warm Indian summer sun beat down on them. The temperature was at least in the in the mid seventies. They got up and went and sat on the log looking out over the lake. With a look into each others eyes, a now familiar conversation flashed unspoken between them. After testing the water, they decided that a swim wasn't such a good idea. Even though the sun was warm, it was November and the water was very cold.

Rather than going for a swim, they decided to take the hunting trail back as far as the spring that fed into the creek. They hadn't gone very far when they heard some horses coming up behind them on the trail. Looking over his shoulder, Curly saw a couple of deer hunters approaching. "The one is Bill Casper." Curly said to Geannie. "I don't recognize the other fellow."

Bill Casper was classmate of Curly and Geannie. He was one of many poor young men who had a crush on Geannie. None of them ever had a chance at winning her affections. Bill and his wife were members of the Greene Memorial congregation.

They stopped along the trail to wait for the hunters to catch up and pass them. As they drew near, Bill called out, "Curly, Geannie, is that you? I heard you were in town."

Curly returned the greeting. "Hi Bill. Its been a while. How've ya been?"

Bill and his companion stopped to chat for a moment. Bill said, "Its good to see you two. I haven't seen you for a long time.

"Curly, Geannie, this is my brother-in-law Al Tumbler."

"Pleased to meet you Al." Curly said as he reached up to shake his hand.

"Al, these are my good friends Curly and Geannie Brason. We pretty much grew up together. Curly and I were on the wrestling team together. He went on to be an NCAA champion at Annapolis."

"Annapolis, huh. Are you a Navy man?" Al asked.

Bill answered for him, "Not only is he a Navy man, he's a pilot."

"That sounds exciting." Al commented.

"We'd love to stay and chat, but we need to be moving on." Bill interrupted. "I hope to see you at services on Sunday. We can catch up then."

Curly answered, "Yeah, we'll be there. We can visit then. Good luck with the hunt."

Geannie spoke for the first time, "It was good to see you Bill."

Bill waved over his shoulder as they rode on up the trail ahead of Curly and Geannie who also went on their way. As they neared the spring, there was log across the creek that had to be crossed to get to the spring. Curly led the way, holding Geannie's hand as they crossed. Once on the other side, they followed the stream that flowed from the spring.

"This is such a pretty spot." Geannie commented. "I don't know why we come back here more often." They sat on a flat rock that jutted from the hillside next to the spring and took in the beauty as the afternoon sun filtered through the Douglas fir. They sat there with an arm around each other taking it all in without speaking.

Curly turned toward Geannie and looked into her emerald eyes and said, "I love you."

"I love you, too." Geannie replied as she moved her face close to his. Momentarily their lips brushed, followed by some very long, serious kissing.

Geannie sighed, "Why don't we go back to the cabin and see where this goes?"

Curly stood up and took Geannie by the hand and helped her up. Once standing, he took her into his arms for another kiss, or two, or three. "I know what you want." he said. "I can see it in your eyes."

"And just what do you see?" Geannie asked.

"The reflection of our unborn child."

"My, aren't you waxing poetic." Geannie teased.

Hand in hand, they made their way back to the creek. Again they crossed the log with Curly leading Geannie by the hand. All of a sudden, Geannie lost her footing and fell off the log into the creek, taking Curly with him. As they found themselves suddenly sitting in the cold water, what else was there to do but to laugh.

Curly swiped his hand across the water, splashing it all over Geannie. What ensued was full blown water fight. By the time they climbed up out of the creek, they were both drenched from head to foot.

Dripping wet, they made their way back down the trail to the lake. They gathered up their picnic and began the hike back to the cabin. The late afternoon sun had little effect on drying their clothes. As soon as they returned to the cabin, Curly built a fire in the fireplace. They took off their wet clothes and hung them by the fire to dry. Its a wonder they didn't catch cold.

Shivering, Curly and Geannie wrapped up in a blanket on the floor and huddled in front of the fire where they warmed each other with the warmth from their bodies. The fire helped too. Before long the warmth beneath the blanket grew into a raging inferno.

After changing into some dry clothes, they found something to eat. After supper, Geannie dug out the records while Curly slid all of the furniture up against the walls. They spent the evening dancing to record after record. They did the waltz, the foxtrot, and some ragtime. Geannie did a pretty good Charleston solo and they even attempted a tango.

Tired from dancing the night away, Geannie helped Curly move the furniture back into place. They sat together in front of the fire for a while before finally turning in for the night.

The next morning, Curly was anxious to leave before Geannie wanted any more. He had given her everything he had in him. Geannie was anxious to go too, she missed Sandy. While Curly made breakfast, Geannie packed their suit cases and stripped the bed and remade it with the fresh the fresh bedding she had brought.

After breakfast they strolled down to creek and sat on the bridge and reminisced about all the fun that they had had at the cabin when they were kids. By mid morning they headed back down the mountain towards Roanoke. Geannie hoped and wondered if she had been successful after several months of trying. Unbeknown to her, a miraculous chain of events had been set in motion deep inside of her body. At that very moment cells were dividing and multiplying as a tiny, microscopic form was taking shape.

When they returned, Sandy was happy to see her Mommy and Daddy. She had no concept of time to know how long they were gone.

Making good on their wish to visit with family, they spent all of one day with Walt and Sarah. The two couples had so much to catch up on. When Walt took over from their father at the church, rather than move into the parsonage, Walt remained in the nice home they had bought directly across the street from the church. A deal was arranged with the church to swap properties, allowing Emmett and Ellen to remain in the house that had been there home for so long. After a wonderful day together, they visited late into the evening. Sandy fell asleep early on. Rather than go back to Geannie's parents' at such a late hour, Walt and Sarah put them up in their guest room for the night.

On Sunday they attended church services. They encountered Bill Casper and his wife. They visited for a moment about where they were living and Curly's naval career. Curly asked Bill how the hunting trip went.

Their time passed quickly as it always does. Geannie did get to visit Hollings and looked up some of her teachers. All in all it was very relaxing time. Something they both needed.

Their last full day in Roanoke before going back to Coronado happened to be Thanksgiving Day. Rather than having Thanksgiving dinner at the Austin Mansion, both families got together in the hall at the church. There were simply too many people to fit any more when both going families got together. Even

Geannie's Aunt Jane and fourteen year old cousin, Valerie, came down from Baltimore

Friday was a day of good-byes as Curly, Geannie, and Sandy boarded the train for the trip home. They got home with one day to recuperate before Curl had to report for duty.

Curly fit right back into the training regiment. Geannie resumed her piano lessons and her other activities. A little over a week later it was their "birthaversary" marking their fifth wedding anniversary and their twenty eight birthdays. That morning Geannie slept in as she wasn't feeling well. Curly had some coffee brewing when Geannie came stumbling out.

Curly was only half way through, "Happy birthaversary," when Geannie began gaging at the smell of the coffee. She quickly put her hands to her mouth and dashed for the bathroom. Curly followed and through the door could hear her throwing up.

When she was through, she washed her face and freshed up a bit. When she came out of the bathroom, Curly asked, "Are you alright, sweetheart?"

"Things couldn't be any better." she beamed. This time Geannie knew how to read what her body was telling her. Curly hadn't caught on and hurried off to his morning briefing at the air station.

That evening Curly came through the door with his usual greeting. "Hi sweetheart! I'm home."

Geannie, who was in the kitchen working on supper, called out, "Hi, Lieutenant. I'll be there in just a moment. How was your day?"

"Just dandy." Curly answered as he brought the a big square box that he had carried home with him into the kitchen where he set it down on the table. With his arms empty, he took Geannie in his arms.

Before giving him a kiss, she excitedly remarked, "Ooooo! What do we have here? Usually you make make me wait until after supper." The kiss she gave him was rather abbreviated as her attention was on the package wrapped in red paper. Bouncing up and down on the balls of her feet she asked, "Can I open it? Can I open it?"

"Go ahead. Here, Sandy wants to help too." He said as he plopped her down on the table. Together they ripped off the wrapping paper.

Geannie opened the top of the box and peered inside. "Oh Curly!" This is just what I have been wanting." she exclaimed as she removed a stack of six matching dinner plates and set them on the table. "Between moving twice and Sandy breaking one, I only have one of the ones we got for our wedding left. Nothing I have matches.

"Oh and look, matching saucers, cups, and bowls." She said as she removed them from the box. "Oh, Curly! They're lovely."

"There is something else in the bottom."

Geannie removed a set of six piece set of flatware and opened it. "You know, I don't know for the

life of me were most of our spoons have disappeared to. With the glasses we have, now I can set matching places at the table.”

“Happy bithavresary, sweetheart.” Curly said as Geannie gave him a big hug followed by a more appropriate kiss.

“Thank you! Thank you! I just love it. You always get me such nice gifts every time. Wait right there, I have something for you too.” Geannie disappeared to Sandy's bedroom where she retrieved his present from under a pile of spare blankets in the closet. A moment later she returned with it. “I hope you enjoy this.” She said as she handed him a rather flat package.

Sandy helped him open his present too. “Oh Geannie, thank you I need one of these.” He said as he held a new log book in his hands. The navy blue cover was embossed with “The Personal Log of Lieutenant Sheffield Brason, U.S. Navy.” Then he added, “My old one is just about full. He then gave her another hug and a kiss.

Sandy, who was feeling left out of all of the hugs and kisses, tugged on her Daddy's pant leg with one hand and the hem of her her Mommy's skirt with the other. Curly stooped down and picked her up. She was smothered by kisses simultaneously on both checks.

Curly sat Sandy back down on the floor and ran some water to wash two of the new dishes and some flatware to set the table. “How was your day?” Curly asked as he dried them with a white flour sack dish towel. “I hope you are feeling better.”

“Like I told you this morning, I haven't felt better. I have another surprise for you.” She said as she took his arms and wrapped them around herself placing his hands on her lower abdomen. “Guess what I have in here?” she asked.

It took a moment for the meaning of her question to sink in. Then he spun her around to face him. With a big grin on his face he asked, “Are you serious? It finally worked?”

“Uh huh.” Geannie nodded. “As near as I can tell, it happened while we were at the cabin. I still need to see a doctor, but I'm pretty sure.”

“Well, I'll be.” was all Curly could say. “No kidding? So when will it be born?”

“As near as I figure it, in August.”

Curly was ecstatic that their efforts had paid off and they were about to add to their family. But his excitement was nothing compared to Geannie's.

They turned their attention to putting the last of supper on the table and Curly said Grace. As they ate, Curly asked Geannie, “How was your day otherwise?”

She told him about her day and her piano lessons and concluded with, “You know, the usual. How about your day?”

“It was great.” He got carried away in the details of his flight, gesturing the motion of his plane with his hands to describe the maneuvers he had made. “Oh and I have news for you too.”

“Oh. What's that?” Geannie asked.

“I'll be leaving just after the first of February for fleet exercises around Panama and in the Caribbean. It looks like I won't be back until the first part of June. I can start my new logbook with this cruise.”

“That's four months.” Geannie commented. “That's okay, I don't need you any more anyway.” she teased. “I got what I wanted.” she said, patting her tummy.

Curly feigned a pout.

During supper and the rest of the evening they talked about the baby and Curly's upcoming cruise. Eventually their conversation turned to their plans for the holidays.

The next day Geannie confided in her friend Romona about her suspicion. She wanted to know where to find a doctor. Geannie was thinking about seeing a family doctor in Coronado rather than going to a Navy doctor.

Romona explained that there was a civilian doctor on staff at the the Navy Hospital who's sole responsibility was taking care the wives and children of naval personnel from the air station, the base, and the recruit training facility in San Diego. She said that even though she didn't work with Doctor Reynolds, she knew of him and his reputation. Geannie decided to give him a try and made an appointment.

Christmas was more exiting that year as Sandy was able to understand just a bit more of what all of the excitement was about. They couldn't set any wrapped gifts out because Sandy delighted in ripping the them open.

At the end of the month Geannie went to see Doctor Reynolds and he confirmed what she already knew. She found Doctor Reynolds to be very gentle and thorough. Although in her mind, he did not hold a candle to Commander Phillips back in Pensacola, no one could. However, the facility was much better than the infirmary at Pensacola. It was a very modern hospital, having only been built in 1922 and incorporated all of the latest medical equipment.

That evening, they left Sandy with a baby sitter and went out to celebrate not only New Years Eve, but also the miraculous chain of events that had been set in motion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lieutenant Commander Frank “Honus” Wagner was the actual commanding officer of Fighting Two and did incorparte dive bombing tactics into the squadron. The mock attack on the Battle Fleet at San Pedro actually took place as described.